

### Backers vow to keep Keystone in pipeline

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Don't think for a moment that congressional supporters of the Keystone XL pipeline are through pushing their cause on Capitol Hill.

"This is not the last you've heard of this issue," one senior Senate GOP aide said. "Not by a long shot."

The pipeline didn't make the cut for the House-Senate transportation deal. But Republicans have reveled in using every chance to portray President Barack Obama's rejection of TransCanada's pipeline project as a symbol of what they view as his failed energy record — and they're not ready to stop.

Rep. Lee Terry (R-Neb.) said Wednesday that he is "poised and ready to pounce" on the next bill to which he can attach authorization of the pipeline.

A mix-up over amendment language robbed Terry and other House Republicans of an opportunity last week to attach language approving the pipeline to a broader House energy strategy. House lawmakers have voted to approve the pipeline multiple times already this Congress.

But dropping Keystone from the transportation bill means the pipeline won't be part of one of the few remaining must-pass measures this year — at least before the November election.

Casting aside Keystone — as well as an effort to trump EPA coal ash regulations — was necessary "so those political issues will not hold up approval of this major transportation bill," House Transportation and Infrastructure ranking member Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) said Wednesday. "That was, for the senators, especially very important."

Rahall supports the pipeline and coal ash provisions. "But I made it very clear from the get-go that was not going to hold me up from approving a transportation bill," he said. "Let's fight that on another day, on another bill. Or as a standalone."

The conventional wisdom during the latter part of the conference talks was that Republicans were willing to give up the Keystone and coal ash provisions in lieu of language they wanted elsewhere, including measures to expedite environmental reviews of transportation projects. They are expected to get that in the final deal.

"My understanding is for some give on enhancements, cycling, pedestrian, for some give on streamlining, Republicans are willing to postpone the fight on Keystone to another day since it's just a talking point anyway," said Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), a senior Democrat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and member of the transportation conference. "That's just as well. This is a real bill. It's not a talking point."

Burgess Everett contributed to this report.